Use Week of:

Unit 13 • Session 3

Elijah and Elisha

BIBLE PASSAGE:
2 Kings 2

STORY POINT:
God chose Elisha to continue Elijah's work as a prophet.

KEY PASSAGE:
Isaiah 42:8

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:
How many gods are there? There is one true God who alone deserves worship.

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Additional resources are available at gospelproject.com. For free training and session-by-session help, visit MinistryGrid.com/gospelproject.

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LEADER Bible Study

Following God's great display of power at Mount Carmel, Elijah fled for his life and traveled to Mount Horeb where he encountered God in a soft whisper. God instructed Elijah to anoint a man named Elisha as his successor. Elijah found Elisha plowing a field. Elijah put his cloak over Elisha to show that Elisha would be a prophet like Elijah. Elisha followed Elijah and served him for many years. In time, King Ahab of Israel appointed his son Ahaziah as king. When Ahaziah died, his brother Joram became king.

Elijah's ministry came to an end, and God took him to heaven in an unusual way. First, Elijah and Elisha traveled from Gilgal to Bethel to Jericho and then to the Jordan River. Elijah met with other prophets and their families. Despite Elijah's insistence otherwise, Elisha did not leave Elijah's side.

A group of prophets watched as Elijah parted the Jordan River by striking the water with his mantle (cloak) so he could cross. In Elijah's final moments, Elisha requested, "Please, let me inherit two shares of your spirit" (2 Kings 2:9). Elisha wanted power to continue God's work and confirmation as Israel's next prophet.

A chariot of fire and horses of fire suddenly appeared and separated the men. Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind, and Elisha cried out after him. When Elijah was out of view, Elisha picked up Elijah's cloak and struck the water of the Jordan River. The water parted—a sign that Elisha had received power from God. Elisha would continue the work of Elijah as a prophet to Israel.

God gave Elisha the same spirit that was in Elijah so Elisha could carry out his mission as a prophet. Years later, Jesus told His followers to wait for the Holy Spirit. God gives believers the Holy Spirit so they can share the gospel with the world.

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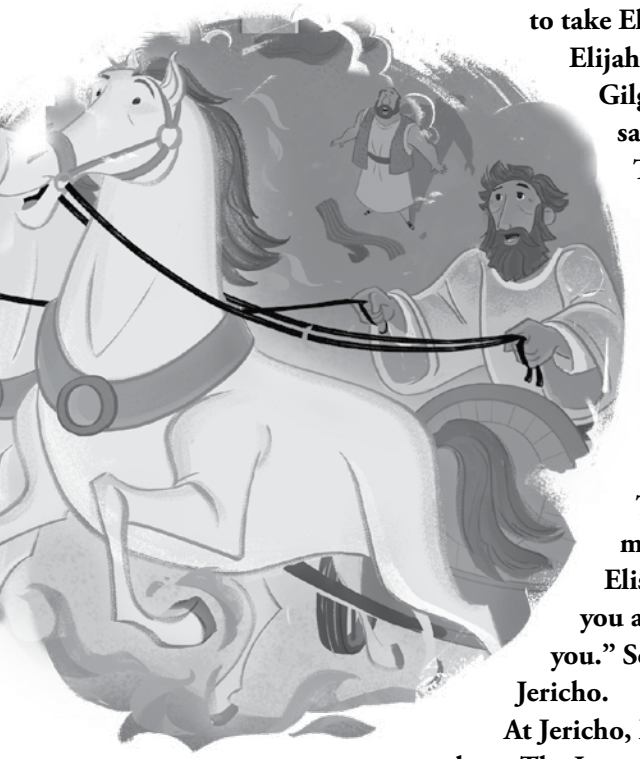
Elijah and Elisha

2 Kings 2

God told the prophet Elijah (ih LIGH juh) **to find a man named Elisha** (ih LIGH shuh)**. Elisha would be a prophet to Israel after Elijah.** So **Elijah** obeyed God. He **found Elisha** plowing a field**, and Elisha followed Elijah and served him.**



When the time came for the Lord to take Elijah up to heaven, Elijah and Elisha traveled to Gilgal. At Gilgal, Elijah said, "Elisha, stay here. The LORD is sending me to Bethel." But Elisha said, "As long as you are alive, I will not leave you." So they went together to Bethel.

At Bethel, Elijah said, "Elisha, stay here. The LORD is sending me to Jericho." But Elisha said, "As long as you are alive, I will not leave you." So they went together to Jericho.

At Jericho, Elijah said, "Elisha, stay here. The LORD is sending me to the Jordan River." But Elisha said, "As long as you are alive, I will not leave you." So they went together to the Jordan River.

A crowd of prophets watched Elijah and Elisha as they stood by the

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river. **Elijah rolled up his cloak and hit the water with it. The river parted, and they crossed to the other side.**

Elijah asked, "Is there anything I can do for you before I go?"

Elisha said, "I want a double portion of the spirit that you have."

Elijah said, "If you see me go, you will have it."

Suddenly, a chariot of fire with horses of fire appeared and drove between them. Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind.

Elisha watched as Elijah went away. Then he picked up Elijah's cloak and went back to the river. He hit the water, and it parted for him to cross to the other side just as it had for Elijah.

The crowd of prophets was there watching, and they saw that **the spirit that was with Elijah was now with Elisha.** The prophets searched for Elijah, but they could not find him since God had taken him up to heaven.

Christ Connection: God gave Elisha the same spirit that was in Elijah so Elisha could carry out his mission as a prophet. Years later, Jesus told His followers to wait for the Holy Spirit. God gives believers the Holy Spirit so they can share the gospel with the world.

Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Use props:** Roll up a robe or long scarf to hold up when referencing Elijah's cloak.
- **Display art:** Show the Bible story picture as you tell the story. Point out Elijah and Elisha.

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INTRODUCE the Story

SESSION TITLE: Elijah and Elisha

BIBLE PASSAGE: 2 Kings 2

STORY POINT: God chose Elisha to continue Elijah's work as a prophet.

KEY PASSAGE: Isaiah 42:8

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How many gods are there? There is one true God who alone deserves worship.

Welcome time

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to share about a time that someone made a big promise to them. Did that person keep the promise? How did that make them feel?

Activity page (5 minutes)

- "Up and Away" activity page, 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Invite kids to complete "Up and Away" on the activity page. Guide kids to complete the dot-to-dot to reveal part of today's Bible story picture.

SAY • What picture did you discover? [*Allow kids to respond.*] Have you ever heard of a chariot of fire or horses of fire? They make an appearance in today's Bible story. I can't wait for you to hear more!

LOW PREP

- batons (rulers, large craft sticks, or unsharpened pencils), 1 per team

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Pass the baton

Form teams of four or five kids. The first kid on each team will hold the baton while running across the playing area and back to the team. Then he or she will pass the baton to the next kid in line. Repeat until all of one team's members have completed the relay.

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SAY • Have any of you seen a real relay race where the runners have to pass a baton to their next team member? It's crucial that a runner doesn't drop the baton, or the team could be disqualified. In today's story, we will learn how God "passed the baton" from one prophet to another so His work didn't stop.

OPTION 2: Double portion

Ask the kids to think of things that can double in size. You may choose to write down their answers. Examples include *sapling to a tree, kid to an adult, ball of yeast dough that rises*, and so on.

- balloons
- Allergy Alert download

SAY • Those were great suggestions. Most things that can double in size take a long time. Let's see if we can think of something that will double almost instantly?

Show the kids a balloon and begin blowing it up. If you have balloons for all of the kids, distribute balloons and allow them to try.

SAY • By putting our breath inside the balloon, the balloon doubles very quickly. In today's story, we are going to learn about a time when God gave a double portion of His Spirit to one of His servants.

Transition to teach the story

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TEACH the Story

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Countdown

- countdown video

Show the countdown video as you transition to teach the story. Set it to end as the session begins.

Introduce the session (3 minutes)

- leader attire

[Leader enters while slowing spinning around and around. He or she stops in front of the kids.]

LEADER • Whew! My head is spinning after all that twisting. Hey, that reminds me of a great meteorology joke I just heard. Want to hear it? What did one whirlwind say to another? [*Pause.*] Let's go for a spin! [*Laugh and demonstrate with your hands for a more humorous affect.*] There's nothing like a good weather joke to start the day!

[*Notice some kids aren't laughing.*] Hmm, some of you didn't think that was so funny. Well, I guess you might be right. Whirlwinds and tornadoes are pretty serious when they occur, and they can be very destructive. Some people lose everything in a tornado. It picks up everything—cars, houses, even animals—and carries it all away.

In our Bible story today, God used a whirlwind to

Tip: If you prefer not to use themed content or characters, adapt or omit this introduction.

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carry away something very special; actually, someone very special. But it was all part of God's plan.

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • Before we "spin" into the story, let's review our big picture question: ***How many gods are there? There is one true God who alone deserves worship.*** Throughout the Bible, God shows us that He is in control and is the only real God.

Giant timeline (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

- Giant Timeline

LEADER • In our first session, God sent the prophet Elijah to announce a drought was coming because the people of Israel were worshiping idols. **God provided in miraculous ways** for Elijah and the widow who let him stay at her house.

Last time, we learned God that sent Elijah to announce the coming rain. But first, God miraculously displayed His power and defeated the prophets of Baal. **God showed that He is the one true God.** Now it's time to see what happened next.

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to 2 Kings 2. Use the Bible storytelling tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video "Elijah and Elisha."

- Bibles
- "Elijah and Elisha" video
- Big Picture Question Poster
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Story Point Poster

LEADER • Think for a moment about what it would have been like to be a prophet in the crowd that day, to see the Jordan River part as Elijah and Elisha walked through. Imagine watching some sort of whirlwind

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tornado come and carry Elijah away. Then Elisha picked up Elijah's cloak, parted the river again, and walked back across. **God chose Elisha to continue Elijah's work as a prophet.** Elisha would continue warning Israel of the consequences of sin, and he would strengthen and encourage those who still followed God.

I like the beginning of the story as the two were traveling. Elijah told Elisha three times to stay put, but Elisha promised to never leave Elijah as long as he was alive. Elisha journeyed with Elijah the whole way. When Elisha asked for God's spirit to be with him, Elijah made a promise to Elisha: "If you see me go, you will have it" (2 Kings 2:10).

God allowed Elisha to see Elijah be taken into heaven and then granted Elisha's request. The prophets in the crowd saw God's power through Elisha just as they had seen in Elijah.

Christ connection

Tip: Use Scripture and the guide provided on page 49 to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

LEADER • God gave Elisha the same spirit that was in Elijah so Elisha could carry out his mission as a prophet. Years later, Jesus told His followers to wait for the Holy Spirit. God gives believers the Holy Spirit so they can share the gospel with the world.

Questions from kids video (3 minutes)

- "Unit 13, Session 3" questions from kids video

Show the "Unit 13, Session 3" questions from kids video. Prompt kids to think about if there are prophets today. Guide them to discuss who in their own life has taught them God's Word and what they can share with others.

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Missions moment (3 minutes)

Show the photo of the hospital in Tanzania. Display a Bible beside some medical equipment (toys or pictures). Ask kids which item they think is most important to the work of Dr. Larry Pepper, a doctor in the African country of Tanzania.

- "Hospital in Tanzania" printable
- Bible
- toy medical equipment or photos of medical equipment

LEADER • **God chose Elisha to continue Elijah's work as a prophet.** God chose Dr. Larry Pepper to continue His work in Africa and tell the people there about Him. Dr. Pepper does that by working through a hospital in Tanzania and treating sick and hurting people.

He also tells his patients about Jesus, and that is most important. Dr. Pepper uses the Bible to help people know Jesus so they can have life with God forever. ***How many gods are there? There is one true God who alone deserves worship.***

Key passage (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together Isaiah 42:8. Instruct them to raise their arms in the air, spinning like a whirlwind above their heads while they say it together.

- Key Passage Poster
- "I Am the Lord" song

LEADER • Elijah had finished everything God planned for him, so it was time for him to go to heaven. There was still work for Elisha to do to help Israel know that the Lord alone is God.

God used another amazing demonstration of weather to show His power to Elisha and the prophets. All glory and praise belong to the Lord. Lead boys and girls in singing the song "I Am the Lord."

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Sing (4 minutes)

· "Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing" song

Open your Bible and read aloud 2 Peter 1:21.

LEADER • God chose men to be prophets and share His message with His people. **God chose Elisha to continue Elijah's work as a prophet**, and God's Spirit was with Elisha. Let's sing.

Sing together "Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing."

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

LEADER • Dear God, You are in control of everything! You don't need us, but You allow us the privilege of being part of Your plan to share Your message with the world because You love us. Thank You for Your love today and forever. Amen.

Dismiss to apply the story

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The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means "good news." It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.

God rules. Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.

We sinned. Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)

God provided. Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.

Jesus gives. Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.

We respond. Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus. Provide *I'm a Christian Now!* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

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APPLY the Story

SESSION TITLE: Elijah and Elisha

BIBLE PASSAGE: 2 Kings 2

STORY POINT: God chose Elisha to continue Elijah's work as a prophet.

KEY PASSAGE: Isaiah 42:8

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How many gods are there? There is one true God who alone deserves worship.

Key passage activity (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- classroom object

Instruct boys and girls to stand in a circle. Display the key passage poster. Lead kids in reading aloud Isaiah 42:8.

Give one kid an object. She should say the first word of the key passage and pass the object to her left. The next player will say the next word, pass the object, and so on until kids say the entire key passage. For an added challenge, hide the key passage poster and prompt kids to recite the key passage from memory.

SAY • When God took Elijah up to heaven, Elijah's responsibilities were passed to Elisha to continue the same message in our key passage. Now we have the responsibility to share this message with the world.

Discussion & Bible skills (10 minutes)

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Story Point Poster
- "Kings of Israel and Judah" printable
- Small Group Timeline and Map Set (005802970)
- tape

Distribute Bibles. Guide boys and girls to open their Bibles to 2 Kings 2. Direct kids' attention to the lists of kings from the "Kings of Israel and Judah" printable. Keep the lists in view for the remainder of the volume.

Remind kids that Elijah and Elisha were prophets in Israel. Tape the Elijah and Elisha name tags next to the list of Israel's kings. Point to King Ahab's name. Explain that

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Ahab ruled over Israel for 22 years. Then Ahaziah was king of two years, followed by King Joram. All of these kings were bad; they did not follow God. Move the arrow to Joram's name.

Remind kids that after Elijah escaped from Queen Jezebel, God spoke to Elijah and told him to go find Elisha.

SAY • **God chose Elisha to continue Elijah's work as a prophet.** When Elijah knew it was time for him to be with God, Elijah and Elisha traveled to Gilgal. [*Point to the area just north of Jericho (H6) on the Old Testament Kingdoms Map.*] From there, they traveled to Bethel (G4). From Bethel, they traveled to Jericho and then to the Jordan River.

Choose a volunteer to read aloud 2 Kings 2:11. Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

Option: Retell or review the Bible story using the bolded text of the Bible story script.

1. What was significant about the Jordan River parting for Elijah and Elisha? *Prompt kids to recall other instances of waters parting in the Bible. (*Moses at the Red Sea, Joshua at the Jordan River*) Emphasize that these miracles showed God's presence and power with His people. God's power was in Elijah and also with Elisha when God chose Elisha to continue Elijah's work as a prophet.*
   (Option: Choose a volunteer to read 2 Pet. 1:3.)
2. What mission does God call all believers to? *Lead kids to discuss our mission as followers of Jesus: to make disciples of all nations by the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus calls us to tell others the good news so they may repent, believe, and have life with Him forever.*
   (Option: Choose a volunteer to read John 20:21.)
3. Why is the Holy Spirit important to us? *Help kids understand that the Holy Spirit is a gift from God to*

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believers. The Spirit will never leave us. Through the Spirit, God empowers us to carry out His mission of sharing the gospel with the world.
(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Rom. 15:13.)

Activity choice (10 minutes)

LOW PREP

- "Missions Event Planning Guide" printable
- boxes
- paper
- markers or crayons
- freezer bags

Tip: Use this activity option to reinforce the missions moment from Teach the Story.

OPTION 1: Care kits

SAY • We've been learning about Dr. Larry Pepper, a doctor who helps people heal physically and spiritually. He tells people the good news about Jesus and teaches others to continue God's work in Tanzania. We can be a part of work like that right where we are.

Use the "Missions Event Planning Guide" to make plans to collect supplies for simple medical kits that can be distributed through a local homeless shelter or food pantry.

Encourage kids to think through some of the details on the guide. They can begin to decorate collection boxes and discuss where to put them around the church. Talk about ways to let the church know about this mission project to meet physical needs and spiritual needs.

Supplies for the kits should include adhesive bandages, antibacterial wash/ointment, cotton balls/gauze pads, and small Bibles or notes of encouragement including Scripture. Plan for kids to assemble the supplies in freezer bags after a few weeks of collections.

- bottled waters, 1 per kid
- funnels
- spoons
- glitter
- dish soap
- glue
- pitcher (optional)

OPTION 2: Whirlwind in a bottle

Give kids bottled water and allow them to take a few sips to make room at the top. Alternatively, you may provide a pitcher for kids to pour out a bit of water. Guide each kid to add two or three drops of dish soap and use a funnel to add some glitter.

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Demonstrate how to place a small amount of glue around the inside of the cap before tightening it on the bottle to help hold it in place. Finally, show the kids how to shake the bottle in a circular motion and create a "whirlwind" effect.

Option: Review the gospel with boys and girls. Explain that kids are welcome to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions.

SAY • Today's Bible story told us that God took Elijah up in a whirlwind. ***God chose Elisha to continue Elijah's work as a prophet.*** Elijah did not experience death but went straight to heaven. Does anyone know another person in the Bible whom God took straight into heaven without dying? (*Enoch, Gen. 5:24*)

Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

- pencils
- Journal Page
- "Elijah or Elisha?" activity page, 1 per kid

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas. Then pray, thanking God that He allows us to be part of the mission of spreading God's message, the good news about Jesus.

Tip: Give parents this week's *Big Picture Cards for Families* to allow families to interact with the biblical content at home.

As time allows, lead kids to complete "Elijah or Elisha?" on the activity page. Kids should fill in the blanks with the correct name—Elijah or Elisha. Encourage them to read the Scripture references to check their work.

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